

NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY



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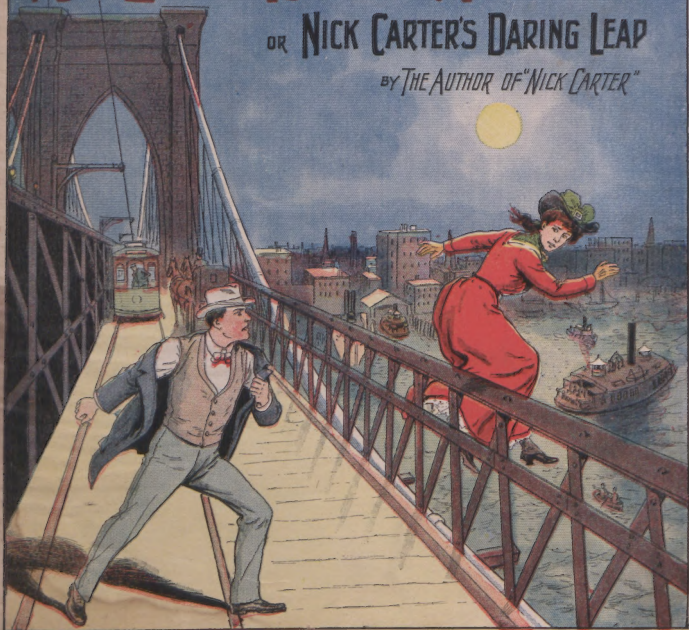
1925

Price, Five Cents.

AN EAST RIVER MYSTERY

OR NICK CARTER'S DARING LEAP

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NICK CARTER"



The girl waved her hand mockingly at Nick and, turning, leaped into the night and into the space beneath her.

1960-1961
SEND YOUR WANT LIST.
RALPH P. SMITH
BOX 985
LAWRENCE, MASS.

Announcement. Readers of this weekly will find that the stories have been increased more than one-third over their former length. This increase is made in response to a general demand that the weekly be issued more frequently than once a week. To do that is impossible, but we have increased the length to show our appreciation of the favor with which these stories have been received. You will find that there is no drop in the quality with the increase. From this on, these stories will be the longest as well as the best of their kind published.



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NEW YORK, March 11, 1905.

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AN EAST RIVER MYSTERY

OR,

Nick Carter's Daring Leap.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THREE MYSTERIOUS MURDERS.

At half-past four o'clock in the morning following Independence Day, the fifth of July, the sound of a pistol shot does not startle a person as it would do at any other time of the year.

People who reside in the cities have already passed through a preparatory stage of that sort of thing, for restless boys who cannot await the approach of the real day have already given utterance to their patriotism in many a premature outburst of firecrackers; and the enthusiasm will linger over, always, into the following day.

And so, a pistol shot in the early morning hours of the "Fourth" is not a surprising incident.

And yet, to a man who was passing rapidly along Twenty-third Street, and who was startled out of his

condition of absent-mindedness by such an occurrence, it acted as a genuine surprise.

He halted abruptly in his walk, and turned his eyes in the direction from which the shot had come.

Twenty-third Street at that hour in the morning is more nearly deserted than at any other time, and as the person whom the sound had disturbed glanced hastily first in one direction and then another, he noticed that there was not even a street car in sight; not a pedestrian or a vehicle of any kind, save the one from which the sound itself had appeared to proceed.

And that vehicle was an ordinary hack.

It was careering furiously through the street toward Fourth Avenue, and was, at the time the sound of the shot smote the air, exactly opposite the entrance to the branch post office in the great, white Metropolitan building.

The man who heard the shot and was startled out of his reserve by it, was on the opposite side of the street.

The shot seemed to come from the interior of the hack.

There was no other sound which accompanied it; no scream, no cry of alarm, no voices raised in angry protest, or in laughter, or in song, as might have been the case had the vehicle been occupied by merry-makers who had commenced thus early to celebrate the Fourth.

There was scarcely a moment during which the pedestrian could observe the hack.

It had come upon him so suddenly, wheeling around the corner out of Madison Avenue and dashing away on its wild career toward Fourth Avenue, that he had not really been aware of its proximity until the sound of the pistol shot alarmed him; and then it was gone, almost before he was aware of it.

The man turned and gazed after it with momentary, although fleeting, interest.

He noticed that the driver on the box was huddled forward in an attitude of apparent discomfort, and that he seemed to pay very little attention to his horses, which were now zigzagging through the street as horses will do when the restraining hand of a driver is not directing them.

He shrugged his shoulders, and was about to turn away again, to pursue his course toward Broadway, when he saw a surface car come rapidly into view at the corner of Fourth Avenue, and slide along the rails directly in the path of the approaching horses.

In that instant he realized that a collision was inevitable—and the very next instant it happened.

It was the horses which ran into the car, rather than the car colliding with the animals.

They struck it exactly in the middle, and they had gathered a great deal more speed between the two corners.

There was a sound of-shattering glass and rending boards, the scream of a horse, the dull, splintering crash of the collision itself, the cries of affright from the half a dozen passengers on the car, the hoarse shouts of the motorman and conductor, the starter stationed at the corner, and two or three pedestrians who happened to be near, and then—silence.

The man who had heard the pistol shot turned and retraced his steps toward the scene of the disaster, and, although he was scarcely a moment in reaching the spot, a small crowd had already collected.

People had rushed from the Ashland House, at the corner of Twenty-fourth Street; they had appeared, as if by magic, from adjacent houses, from basements—from anywhere and everywhere, and the man who had believed himself to be almost alone on the street at the moment when he was startled by the shot, was obliged to peer over the heads and shoulders of others in order to obtain an idea of the havoc that had been wrought.

And what havoc it was!

Both horses had been killed outright. The pole of the vehicle had crashed through one of the car windows, and had actually torn a hole through the roof of the car.

The hack was reduced to a condition of kindling wood. It was smashed almost beyond recognition.

The entire front of it was torn away, the wheels were demolished and the roof of it was caved in and shattered, and yet, remarkable as it may seem, the hack had not been overturned.

It was still in an upright position, with the box, or body, resting on the ground, for the running gear could no longer support it.

But all this was not the appalling circumstance of the accident, or what made the men who surged forward to obtain a view stop so suddenly and glance into one another's faces in hushed alarm.

The front and the roof of the hack had been demolished, as has been said; a view of the interior was therefore plainly to be had, and even the most careless observer could see at a glance that the collision was by far the least part of the accident, for there were two bodies inside the vehicle, or what remained of it.

Two bodies—a man and a woman.

A policeman forced his way through the crowd and arrived at a point beside the carriage.

He was a big man, a brusque man, and rather a rough one, and he forced the crowd back and away from him with no gentle hand, and with a certain freedom in the use of his long night stick which compelled the men around him to obey.

He had already rapped for assistance, and other policemen arrived almost as soon as he reached the broken carriage, and they speedily formed a cordon around the wreck.

For one instant, the officer who had arrived first upon the scene bent above the two bodies in the hack, and then he straightened up and whispered something in the ear of the policeman who stood nearest to him; and that one immediately assumed unwonted activity in forcing the crowd back and keeping it back.

"These two people were dead before the hack struck the car," was what he said to his compatriot. "They were shot. Keep the crowd back, and keep still about it."

Then he raised his voice, and shouted:

"Where is the driver of this hack? What became of him? Has anybody seen him?"

A man on the outskirts of the crowd raised his voice in reply. He was the same man who had been startled by the pistol shot while he was passing along the street opposite the branch post office.

"He is up there—on the roof of the car," he said; and he raised his hand and pointed in that direction.

Nobody had thought of looking in such a place for the

driver; it had not occurred to one of the spectators to look up.

But now every face was raised and every eye was turned toward the indicated spot, and everybody there could see that there was a body on the roof of the car, and that the feet of the man projected over the edge of it.

A dozen spectators started forward to the rescue of the driver, but the big voice of the big policeman who had first appeared arrested them.

"Stand back, all of you!" he commanded; and he elbowed his way through the throng to the side of the car, stepped upon the body of one of the dead horses, next to the pole which still projected through the window of the car, and from there he easily gained the roof.

The driver was lying upon his face, directly athwart the roof of the car, where he had evidently been thrown by the shock of the collision. His arms were outstretched beyond his head, so that his hands hung over the opposite edge of the car, as his feet did toward the wrecked carriage.

But even here, the officer discovered at a glance that it was not the shock of the collision, or the result of it, that had killed the driver.

There was another explanation ready at hand, plainly in evidence the instant the policeman reached the spot.

The hilt of a dagger protruded from the driver's back, between his shoulders and only a few inches below the nape of his neck.

The officer turned toward the upturned faces of the crowd below him just at the moment that the patrol wagon arrived on the scene from the station house.

"Drive that crowd back to the curb and keep it there!" he ordered. "If one of the outfit gets fresh, tap him on the nut with your stick. I mean it, gentlemen. Maginnis, run to a box and telephone for the captain. He is at the station house, and can get here in ten minutes; then call up the coroner's office and have him or one of his assistants here as soon as ever it can be done."

"I want to move this car," called out the motorman. "There are half a dozen blocked behind me already."

"Be aisy, me boy," replied the sergeant—for the man on the nut was a sergeant, which explains the authority he had assumed for the occasion. "You will move this car when I say so, and not before."

He swung himself from the top of the car then, but remained standing upon the pole of the hack, keenly observant of everything around him, while he awaited the coming of the persons he had caused to be summoned; and to an officer who climbed up beside him he whispered:

"There are three murders here, Casey. Nobody was killed by the accident, save the two horses; but there was the devil to pay somewhere and somehow, before the accident happened. I have been in this precinct a good many years, on and off, and I never saw the likes of this thing before. And, say, Casey, I'd give a five-dollar bill

out of my own pocket if Nick Carter would happen along here this blessed minute. Did you notice the face of the dead woman, Casey? Woman, did I say! Faith, she's hardly more than a girl, and as pretty and sweet and innocent-looking as a colleen bawn, so she is."

CHAPTER II.

THE MISSING DAGGER.

The man on the outskirts of the crowd, who had indicated the roof of the car as the spot where the driver of the hack might be found, now approached one of the policemen and whispered something to him.

"Sure," replied the officer. "Come ahead. Follow me."

He led the way through the crowd, which had greatly increased in numbers by this time, and so conducted the stranger to the sergeant, who still maintained his perch upon the pole of the hack.

"Here's a man who wants to speak to you, sergeant," he said; and returned to his post at the curb.

"Well, what's eating you?" asked the sergeant, gruffly. "What's on your mind?"

"Will you come down here, or shall I climb up there?" replied the man, calmly. "I want to say something to you."

"Climb up, then; I'm going to stay right here till the captain arrives. That's the ticket. Now, what have you got to say to me, my man?"

"Only that I was the first one who saw the hack before it struck the car. It came around the corner of Madison Avenue on a run."

"All right. Anything more?"

"Yes; there was a pistol shot which came from the inside of the hack just as it turned the corner, and—"

"A pistol shot? From inside the hack. Eh? Are you sure?"

"Yes, sir."

"Only one?"

"That is all I heard. I thought that perhaps you would like to know about it."

"Sure; although I don't see as it is much help, do you?"

"Perhaps not; but I noticed another thing, also."

"Did you? What was that?"

"The number of the hack. I see that the lamps are both shattered into fragments, and so it would be difficult to find out the number—at least, until the owner of the hack puts in a claim for it; but I noticed the number as it passed, and I thought you might like to know what it was."

"Sure. What was it?"

"Ninety-seven-sixty-eight."

"Good. Thank you. What's your name, mister?"

"Pendleton—Horace Pendleton."

"And your address?"

"I am stopping at the Westmoreland Hotel. I shall be there for a week or so yet, so you can easily find me if you should want me."

"All right, Mr. Pendleton. Much obliged. You must excuse me now, for here is the captain."

The sergeant swung down from the pole to the ground and hastened to meet his superior, who at that moment arrived on the scene, and thus, for one moment, he left the stranger, who had announced himself to be Horace Pendleton, standing alone upon the tongue of the wagon, where he could touch, if he had cared to do so, the feet of the dead driver of the hack, where they protruded over the edge of the car roof.

The arrival of the captain of a precinct upon such a scene as was being enacted there is always an event, and every eye in the crowd was, for an instant or more, turned in his direction, just as the general of an army attracts to him, like a magnet, every soldier's glance among his followers as he passes before them.

It was only an instant, perhaps, when every eye in that crowd was turned away from the wrecked hack and the injured car, but in that instant the stranger who had mounted to the pole beside the sergeant disappeared.

Nobody saw him go; nobody missed him.

It is doubtful if anybody noticed him at all, save the sergeant himself, and he straightway forgot all about him, when he noticed the arrival of the captain—and he did not think of the man again until an incident as startling as it was inexplicable recalled it to his mind.

The captain took immediate charge of affairs.

The coroner, who, because he had just returned to his office from another official visit, had been found there when the telephone message was sent to him, arrived at almost the same moment as the captain, and together they approached the hack and its dead occupants.

The sergeant walked behind them.

He explained in as few words and as concisely as possible all that had occurred, describing how he had found the murdered bodies in the hack, and the corpse of the driver, on the roof of the car, with the hilt of a dagger protruding from his back between the shoulders.

"Where were you, sergeant, when the thing happened?" asked the coroner.

"The collision?"

"Certainly."

"Walking in this direction, from Twenty-fourth Street. I was about halfway of the block, I think, when the crash came."

"So you were the first officer on the scene?"

"Yes."

"And was it you who discovered the dead bodies?"

"It was."

"And also the fact that they had been shot, and not killed by the collision?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you hear any pistol shots before the collision occurred? Neither of these persons have been dead half an hour."

"Why, coroner, this is the morning after the Fourth. I haven't heard much else but pistol shots, firecrackers and torpedoes for the last week. Have you?"

"You mean by that that you heard nothing which you could connect with this affair; eh?"

"Yes; that's what I mean."

"Did you search the interior of the hack?"

"Certainly not. I waited for my captain—and you."

"Very good, sergeant. Don't you think it is probably a case of murder and suicide? A case where the man has killed the woman and then shot himself?"

"No, I don't," replied the sergeant. "Anyhow, if that is so, you will find the pistol with which he did it, somewhere in the hack, I suppose. Only the front of it is caved in and the roof torn away. If there was a pistol inside, it could not get out; and, besides—"

"There is no weapon of any kind here, anywhere," interrupted the captain. "I have made a thorough search. There is no pistol here."

"What were you going to add to your statement, sergeant?" asked the coroner.

"I was going to ask you who stabbed the driver in the back."

"Ah! To be sure! To be sure! I had forgotten that."

"I hadn't."

"How could it have been done?"

"You can search me, coroner; but I think it must have been done by somebody inside the hack."

"Could anyone inside the hack have reached the driver to have struck him in that manner, do you suppose?"

"Why, yes. Most of these hacks, of this pattern, have a little trapdoor in the roof directly behind the driver's seat, so that a passenger can give directions without taking the trouble to lean out of the door. The roof and the front of this one is all torn away, but I think you will find that it was supplied with such a trap."

"And you think that one of these passengers reached up through that trap, and—"

"You are going too fast, coroner. I did not say that."

"Well, what did you say?"

"I said that I thought the thing was done by somebody inside that hack."

"Well, these two were inside."

"Sure; and they're inside now; and by the same token, they're dead; and the captain says he can't find any sign of a pistol around there anywhere."

"Well, sergeant, what are you getting at?"

"Sure, coroner, isn't there room in that hack for two more? Ain't there room in almost any hack for four passengers?"

"Why, yes! Yes! To be sure."

"And if there ain't any pistol inside the hack, it stands

to reason that neither one of these dead ones first shot the other and then committed suicide, and by the same token, that neither one of them reached through the roof and stuck a knife into the driver's back, don't it?"

"I suppose it does."

The captain glanced sharply at the sergeant.

"Go ahead, Coyle," he said. "I recommended you, day before yesterday, for detective duty at headquarters, and you are carrying out what I said about you."

The captain stepped past them and climbed over one of the dead horses to the pole, and thence to the roof of the car.

After a moment he turned.

"Come up here, coroner; and you, too, Coyle," he ordered.

Both obeyed, but the sergeant stepped back to permit the coroner to precede him, and he halted for a moment at the edge of the car to reply to a question from one of the officers below.

His attention was suddenly recalled by the sharp voice of the captain addressing him.

"Sergeant," he said, "I thought you told me that the dagger with which this man was killed was still in the wound."

"So it is."

"Nothing of the kind, Coyle. -You're dreaming."

"Dreaming, nit! It was there all right when——"

He stopped suddenly in his speech, crestfallen, and flushed red from neck to forehead.

"Well, when what?" asked the captain, testily.

"Captain," said the sergeant, "I guess you had better recall that recommendation, that's what. I've made a blooming fool of myself. I let a fellow climb up here beside me, because he said he had something to tell me. When you came, I jumped down and left him there, and if that dagger is gone, he took it. I'm a good candidate for headquarters, I am, but it ought to be for a fine, instead of promotion."

CHAPTER III.

THE MAN WHO LIED.

"Sergt. Coyle is downstairs and wishes to see you, sir," said Nick Carter's valet, Joseph. "He begged me to say that it was important, and that he had not much time to spare, so if you would see him at once he would be much obliged."

"All right, Joseph. Bring him up here," replied the detective.

A moment later the sergeant, whom we have already seen at the corner of Twenty-third Street and Fourth Avenue, entered Nick Carter's study.

The time was not yet eight o'clock in the morning, and the detective was just enjoying his after-breakfast cigar.

"Well, Coyle," he said, as the police officer entered

the room, almost filling the doorway with his immense bulk of brawn and sinew, "what's up? What can I do for you?"

"You can do a whole lot for me, if you will, Mr. Carter; but, all the same, I want to tell you, before I begin, that it is a mighty cheeky thing in me to come here to ask you to do it."

"Oh, we'll decide about that later. You are always welcome here, Coyle, as I have told you before. You did me a great favor once, and if the time has come when I can return the service, I will be glad to do it. What's the trouble?"

"Well, sir, I was just on the eve of a certain promotion, which I have been striving for since I came on the force, and now I've gone and made a blooming idiot of myself, so I'll——"

"So you'll lose it, eh?"

"No; but so I will decline it."

"Nonsense. Tell me about it."

"I don't suppose you have heard about the business at the corner of Twenty-third and Fourth Avenue, this morning, have you?"

"No; I haven't heard a thing. What was it?"

"Three murders."

"Three? Humph! That seems to be a good many, doesn't it?"

"It looked like a good many for a little while."

"How were you mixed up in the affair?"

"Why, I let one of the chaps who must have been connected with it in some manner slip through my fingers as slick as grease."

"Suppose you begin at the beginning and tell me about it, just from your own standpoint, Coyle."

"That's precisely what I want to do; and if, after that, you can help me out—well, you can have my trunk forever after, that's all!"

"Tell me the story; but, mind you, tell me your own story."

"You mean just what I saw and know about myself, from my own eyes and ears?"

"Just that."

"I was on Fourth Avenue, on the west side of the avenue, halfway between Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Streets, walking toward Twenty-third, when it happened."

"What time was it?"

"Twenty-five minutes to five this morning. I know, because I had just looked at my old watch, and I had just left Casey at the Twenty-fourth Street corner."

"All right. Go ahead."

"I heard a vehicle of some kind tearing down Twenty-third Street, as if a pair of horses were running away, and, at the same moment, a car, bound downtown, passed me. The car did not stop on the upper side of the cross-

ing, as usual, and it got into the middle of Twenty-third Street just in time to be run into."

"By the runaway team, eh?"

"Yes; it was a hack. Two horses, and good ones, too. They were both killed so sudden that they never knew what hit 'em."

"Those aren't the murders, are they?"

"Wait, sir; you'll hear the rest in a moment. I ran forward as fast as I could. A crowd collected, too. The hack was smashed into splinters, but it didn't turn over. The front of it was caved in, the roof was torn off, the wheels were smashed, the entire running gear was put out of business forever, and it looked as if it had been in an earthquake."

"But it did not turn over on its side, eh?"

"No; that's part of the story."

"Well, go on."

"Both doors remained closed and latched. Say, Mr. Carter, there were two dead bodies inside that hack."

"Dead before it struck the car?"

"Yes, sir; shot—both of 'em."

"Shot, eh? Had they been dead long?"

"Not a half an hour, so the coroner said."

"Ah! He was there, was he?"

"Yes; and the captain. I sent for both of them."

"Go on."

"One was a man and the other a woman. The man was about sixty years old, I should say, and the woman—well, she might have been his daughter."

"So, she was a young woman?"

"Yes; not more than twenty, if that much; and pretty? Say, it made me weep to look at her, so that I had to bluff around and pretend I was as ugly as satan in order to keep the crowd around from knowing how soft-hearted I am."

"You're Irish, Coyle; don't forget that."

"Sure, I'm proud of it!"

"Go on with your story."

"I couldn't find the driver of the hack, and I called out to know if anybody had seen him. There was a man at the back of the crowd who yelled back at me that he was on top of the car, and sure, so he was."

"You found him there, did you?"

"I did that. He was lying face down on top of the roof of the car, where he had been thrown by the force of the impact, and there was a dagger between his shoulders, with the hilt of it sticking up in plain sight. A purty hilt it was, too, all blazin' with jewels that were green and red and white."

"Rubies, emeralds and diamonds, eh? Well, what more?"

"That's where I made the ass of myself, Mr. Carter."

"How so?"

"I called down and sent Maginnis to the telephone, to call up the captain and the coroner; then I stood there,

keeping an eye on things, and waiting till they showed up."

"Well, that was perfectly right."

"Wait, sir. After a few minutes, Casey—he's in our precinct—Casey came over to me from the sidewalk, and says he: 'Sergeant, here's a man wants to speak with you.' 'All right,' says I; and then I axed the man what was eatin' him, and he climbed up onto the tongue of the hack and stood there beside me while he told what he had on his mind."

"What was it?"

"He said that he was walking along the street opposite the branch post office when the hack turned the corner out of Madison Avenue. He said it came around the corner on a run, and that he heard a pistol shot—one, no more—which seemed to come from inside the old hack."

"Anything more?"

"Yes; I thanked him, and then he said that he had also noticed the number of the hack—the one that is painted on the lamps, you know."

"Yes."

"He said it was ninety-seven-sixty-eight."

"Well, go on."

"I asked him for his name and address. He said he was Horace Pendleton, and that he was staying at the Westmoreland; and just then the captain arrived on one side of the street, and the coroner drove up on the other."

"Well, go on. I suppose you jumped down and left the man there, and——"

"Wait, sir. If you guess it all—what a fool I made of myself—I'll feel worse than I do now."

"Go ahead, then."

"I jumped down and left him there, as you said. I went over and met the captain, and I returned to the wrecked hack with him and the coroner. The coroner thought that the man might have shot the woman and then killed himself, but that idea was exploded because there was not a sign of a weapon to be found inside the hack."

"Well."

"While I was standing there talking to the coroner, the captain climbed to the roof of the car to see the body of the driver. After a minute he called us both up there, and if you'll believe it, sir——"

"The dagger with which the driver had been stabbed was missing, eh?"

"That's what it was—gone."

"And you think that the man who brought you the information about the number of the hack took it."

"I haven't a doubt of it."

"Nor I."

"But that isn't all, sir."

"What more is there?"

"As soon as I could, I went around to the Westmoreland Hotel, looking for him."

"Well?"

"He wasn't staying there; they had never heard of such a man; as far as they knew, there had never been such a name on their register."

"So he fooled you in that, too, did he?"

"Yes; and in more than that."

"What more than that?"

"I telephoned down to the city hall about that hack number. I found where it belonged, and I went to the stable where it is owned."

"Well?"

"Ninety-seven-sixty-eight was there. It hadn't been out at all, since yesterday. In fact, it was out of repair and needed fixing, so you see he lied to me about that, too. The fact is, Mr. Carter, he made up both of his lies, just to get up there where I was and steal that dagger, and I was fool enough to let him do it."

CHAPTER IV.

A HUNDRED-THOUSAND-DOLLAR MYSTERY.

"What about the identity of the two bodies in the hack, Coyle?"

"That's another funny thing about the occurrence, sir. There was not a thing found upon either of them which gave any hint of their identity. There wasn't anything but money."

"Eh? Money?"

"Yes; barrels of it."

"Hardly that, Coyle."

"Well, the old man had between sixty and seventy thousand dollars in currency on his person, and the young woman had the balance to make up a hundred thousand, in a little handbag such as women carry in their hands."

"And jewels?"

"Not a jewel of any kind on either of them."

"Watches? The man carried a watch, of course?"

"Nary a watch. He had a chain in his vest, but there was no watch attached to it."

"Was the chain hanging outside his vest, as if a watch had been removed?"

"Yes; but if somebody had removed the watch, don't you think he would have taken the money as well?"

"Possibly, and possibly not."

"I don't see why."

"Well, if there was a third person in the hack before the crimes were committed, as it is quite evident there was, and if his only desire was to kill—if, in short, he cared nothing about the money, but everything about the means of identifying the persons he killed—he might have taken the watch as something which might be traced, and have left the money."

Coyle shook his head.

"I don't see it that way," he said. "A man who would

do that kind of killing, wouldn't turn up his nose at a cool hundred thousand, in my opinion, Mr. Carter."

"Nor in mine—if he was aware of the fact that the hundred thousand was there."

"But he would find it, wouldn't he, while he was searching for the other things?"

"More than likely."

"And, besides, if he could get away as slick as he did, what would be the use of destroying the identity of the people he killed? It would be his own that he ought to destroy."

"I see, Coyle, that you are in line for that promotion you wish for."

"I'll never accept it till I lay my paws onto that chump who fooled me; I mean, that chap, for it was I who was the chump."

"Well," said Nick, smiling, "let us see how another idea will strike you. Two persons are found in a wrecked hack, murdered. There is nothing about them to identify them—for I take it that their linen was examined for laundry marks, and that every effort was made to discover who they were?"

"Sure thing."

"Very well. They have nothing about them to identify them, but they did possess an unusually large amount of cash."

"True for you, sir."

"People like that do not carry around such an amount of money with them unless they are going to be in a position where a ready supply is not always at hand."

"Sure."

"We will say, then, that, for some reason, those two were about to leave the country; that they had a reason for traveling incognito—for not wishing to be known—for keeping under cover, as a crook would put it."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, in that case, they would provide themselves liberally with money if it was at their command, and they would, before starting, destroy everything about their persons which would or could act or operate as identification."

"That's as plain as the nose on my face, sir."

"Now, if there was somebody in the world who wished them out of it, where could he or she find a better opportunity to 'do' them? Eh?"

"Than in the hack, you mean? Faith, it doesn't look like much of an opportunity to me."

"No; I mean than when they had, themselves, destroyed their identities."

"Oh, well, that's all right. I see what you mean now. But the devil of it is, how did the spalpeen get into the hack to do the job, and after it was done, how did he get out of it, and then come to me so soon after it, and—"

"You don't mean to say, do you, Coyle, that you think

the fellow who stole the dagger committed those murders?"

"That's what I've been thinking."

"Well, don't you think it any more, for it is not at all likely."

"Then who did?"

"That is what we've got to find out."

"Whoosh! And it ain't easy, is it? All the same, Mr. Carter, that don't answer my question. How did the fellow who did it get into the hack and get out again?"

"Why, he—or she—we don't know yet whether it was a man or a woman, do we?—he or she probably got into the hack when they did, and doubtless left it by opening the door and swinging into the street while the hack was in motion."

"Right there in front of the branch post office, eh?"

"There, or anywhere."

"It was there where the man heard the pistol shot, and there must have been somebody alive in the hack to have fired the pistol."

"If one was fired at that time—yes."

"But——"

"But, Coyle, the man who called himself Pendleton told you two separate and distinct lies; why is it not possible that he also lied about that?"

"Geewhiz! That's so. I hadn't thought of that. Say, I'm no candidate for that promotion yet a while."

"Oh, don't be so sure about that. You can't expect to hit the nail on the head every time you strike at it. Where are the bodies? Have they been taken to the morgue yet?"

"Yes, all three of them."

"So, you did not identify the driver, either, eh?"

"No; he didn't have any more on him than the others did; that is, no writing or marks of identification."

"Was he also well provided with money?"

"Yes, for a hack driver."

"How much did he have?"

"Between ninety and a hundred dollars."

"Have you been able to find out anything about the hack?"

"Not a thing."

"You discovered no sign of a number anywhere, eh?"

"No; that is, there was a sign of a number, but that was all."

"How do you mean?"

"There had been a number on the lamps some time or other, but the glass was shattered into fine particles. There was no way of telling what the number might have been."

"And the horses? You said they were good ones."

"So they were."

"Nobody has claimed them, or recognized them?"

"No; people aren't anxious to claim dead horses."

"They might put up a claim to the value of them against the railway company."

"Nobody has."

"Were there any marks on the harness?"

"No; they were brand new harnesses, both of them."

"No initials on the bridles, eh?"

"No, sir."

"So you are just about as much in the dark about the case as you were the moment after it happened."

"Yes."

"Well, let us go back for a moment to the man who climbed up on the pole of the hack beside you; but, first, are you sure about the hilt of that dagger being studded with jewels?"

"You bet your life I am. They were the real thing, too, and I know 'em when I see 'em."

"Then you think the dagger was of considerable value."

"It was worth anywhere from a thousand dollars up."

"In that case, we must take into consideration the idea that the man might have stolen the weapon for its value only."

"He might, only he didn't look like that sort of a chap."

"That's the point. What sort of looking man was he?"

"He was a swell, all right. He wore a diamond in his shirt as big as a hazel nut. His watch chain was of heavy gold, and looped into both his waistcoat pockets. His clothes were as swell as swell could be—that suit he wore never cost less than sixty or seventy, and it was brand new; and he carried a gold-headed cane, at that."

"So much, so good; now what about his face and physique? What sort of a looking man was he?"

"He was a man about thirty or thirty-five, I think. He has been a mighty good-looking fellow, too, once on a time."

"Why not now? What was the matter with him?"

"He had a bad scar on his left cheek, as if the flesh had been torn away from it at some time. His mustache, which was long and blond, partially hid the scar, but even that looked as if it had been knocked out of shape by the original wound, and would never get back quite into place again."

"Wait," said Nick, sharply. "That description sounds like somebody I have known about. Tell me, was he tall and graceful? Did he carry himself well when he walked, and did he do this while he talked with you?"

Nick raised his right hand and stroked his upper lip, as if there were a mustache there which he was anxious to keep in perfect order, and he did it with a peculiar twist of the hand, and with the little finger raised at a sharp angle.

"The very thing!" exclaimed Coyle. "He did that very thing—exactly!"

CHAPTER V.

THE BODIES AT THE MORGUE.

"I marked a man in just the way you have described, about six months ago," said Nick, quietly, "and he had that peculiar mannerism I have just enacted. His name was Maigrave, and I have good reasons for remembering him."

"You marked him? With that scar on the cheek, you mean?"

"Yes, and tore away half of his mustache at the time. It might have had a chance to grow in again by this time; only——"

He paused, and as Coyle was watching him expectantly, he added:

"I was going to say that the man Maigrave should not as yet have left his prison. He only got a year, through some miscarriage of justice; but, even so, he should not be out yet."

"We can easily enough find if he is out or not."

"Sure; and we will do so at once. Now, Coyle, Joseph said that you were in a hurry. Are you due back at the station house?"

"Yes, sir; right now."

"Then sit there while I call up your captain on the phone. I want you to go to the morgue with me."

"To see the bodies?"

"Yes; you need not describe them more than you have already done. I prefer to see them for myself; and——"

"What, sir?" asked Coyle, after a lengthened pause, during which the detective seemed to be lost in thought.

"I was about to say," replied Nick, "that I had half a notion to guess at the identity of the murdered man you found in the carriage."

"I don't see how you could do that with only what I have told you to go by."

"Sergt. Coyle, if I were asked to guess about the identity of that man, I should say that the name might be——Simon Blackstone."

"What! The Wall Street broker?"

"Yes; did you ever see him?"

"Not me to know him; but I know about him."

"Everybody in the city has heard about him, I suppose; especially since——"

"Since you broke up that affair about the gold that was made from sea water."

"That wasn't made from sea water, you mean; you mean the man, Maigrave, to whom I referred, and who I have reason to think you have just described to me, as the partner in that affair. Blackstone testified against him at the trial, and—well, I thought, then, and I think still, that Maigrave would not hesitate to kill the capitalist if he had an opportunity."

"But if Maigrave is still in prison?"

"Why, then we will have to look for another theory, that is all."

"But suppose the dead man is Blackstone, and that Maigrave is still in prison?"

"Let us not suppose too much until we have something more definite to go by. What is puzzling me now, if this does happen to be Blackstone, is the identity of the young woman."

"She might have been his daughter, and Maigrave might have done for both of them."

"Blackstone was, or is, a bachelor. He was never married."

"Well, then——"

"There is no use speculating about the case until we know more about it," said Nick, wheeling his chair and taking up the telephone receiver.

"I wish you'd let me say what was on my mind then," insisted Coyle.

"All right. Say it."

"There might have been an added reason for Maigrave's hating Blackstone."

"What, for example?"

"Jealousy."

"There you go too fast, although if we are correct in our conjectures, the idea may be worth consideration. Hello, there! Hello!"

He talked over the telephone for two or three minutes, and then he turned back to Coyle.

"It's all right, Coyle," he said. "You are detailed under my orders until I choose to send you back to your duty at the station house; and I think I'll keep you with me until we have solved the mystery of this case."

"How can I ever thank you, Mr. Carter."

"Tut, tut, man! If you are to be transferred to the central office for detective work, a little vacation under me and a little work with me won't do you any harm. What a big fellow you are, Coyle."

"Yes, sir, pretty big. It runs in the family. I'm six feet three and a half, I haven't a pound of unnecessary flesh on me and I weigh two hundred and thirty-three pounds."

"How strong are you, Coyle?"

"I don't know; at least that's what they say about me—that I don't know my own strength."

"Well, it is a mighty good idea to know something about your own strength," replied the detective, stretching out his right hand. "Take hold of that," he added.

Coyle obeyed.

"Now, put my arm down," said Nick, "with your muscle and weight combined, if you like."

"What! You can't do it? There, you know something about your own strength now, eh?"

"Great Patrick, Mr. Carter! I had no idea you would be able to do that!" exclaimed Coyle.

"I couldn't, if you knew how to use your great strength—and that is one of the things I will teach you while you are with me on this case. Come, now, are you ready?"

"You bet."

"Then let us go to the morgue. Wait; I will order a cab."

Half an hour later they stepped inside the gruesome building at the foot of East Twenty-sixth Street, and were conducted, at their request, to the slabs whereon the victims of the tragedy of Twenty-third Street were laid.

The detective walked at once to the corpse of the man who was found inside the hack, but he made no sign that he recognized the body of the man before him.

Coyle, who was watching him closely, kept in the background; and he also made no sign of interest in the corpses.

Presently Nick passed on to the body of the young woman, and he remained there for a long time, intently studying every feature of the beautiful, young creature who had come to such an untimely and violent death.

"She was very beautiful in life," he thought, "for she is still beautiful in death. She died suddenly and peacefully. The bullet must have pierced her heart."

He turned away, then, and crossed to the slab where the driver of the hack was laid out.

Here, in spite of his reserve, a person watching him closely would have noticed that he made a sudden start.

He remained there only a moment, and then devoting a significant glance upon Coyle, which told him as plainly as words could have done to wait there for his return, he turned out of the room, across the grounds and entered the hospital.

There he found the superintendent, and begged the use of the telephone in his private office for a moment.

Presently he was connected with his own house.

"Click?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Simon Blackstone was murdered this morning, in a hack which collided with a car at Fourth Avenue and Twenty-third Street. He has not been identified, as yet, and I don't want him recognized just yet, either. Catch on?"

"Yes."

"He has shaved off his whiskers and mustache, which prevents his being identified, has he?"

"Yes."

"He did not want to be known. I think he was going out of the country. Now, here's another point. There was a young woman in the hack with him. She was murdered, and by the same hand. Got that?"

"Yes."

"There was a man seen near the place of the collision who was to the description of Margrave. I want to know at once if he has left prison. Will you do that, and have the information for me by the time I get home?"

"Sure thing."

"I don't think Margrave is the murderer, but it is a cinch that he is connected with the crime in some way. I want you to start out without waiting for me, and, if you can do so, get on his track, if he happens to be at liberty."

"All right."

"And I want you to send Patsy here to the morgue. You can tell him what to do as well as I. He need not follow anybody away from the place unless it happens that Margrave should blow in here, which isn't likely."

"Just keep tabs on who comes and goes, eh?"

"Exactly."

"I might send Ten-Ichi down with him. He could stay outside and be ready to take the trail if Patsy thought anybody there needed watching."

"All right. Do that. I'll be back at the house inside of an hour."

He hung up the receiver, thanked the superintendent in the outer office for the use of the telephone and passed back across the grounds to the morgue.

But he did not stop there.

He nodded to Coyle as he went through the room, and the latter followed him to the street.

"There were two men who came in and looked at the three bodies while you were gone," he said, "but they shook their heads and went away again."

"That is nothing," said Nick. "The point is that I was correct in my guess."

"And the dead man is really Simon Blackstone?"

"Yes."

"I suppose that is why you went out, eh? To tell them that you recognized——"

"No, Coyle; it is not why I went out. I don't want anybody to get an idea that the dead man is Blackstone; at least, not before to-morrow morning, if it can be prevented; and he shaved off his whiskers and mustache before he was killed, which has changed him greatly. Come along, now, Coyle, and I'll give you your first lessons in real detective work, and if we don't find this to be a beautiful case, I'm greatly mistaken, that's all."

CHAPTER VI.

AN UNEXPECTED CLEW.

It was still early in the forenoon when the detective, accompanied by Sergt. Coyle, left the morgue to return to his house.

He believed that it was better to go there first, for he wished to know positively about the man, Margrave, before he took further steps in clearing up the mystery of the murders in the hack.

He remembered that he really knew very little about either of the men with whom he had combated in the case to which he had referred in talking with Coyle—the swindle of making gold out of sea water.

While they were riding along in the cab, he rehearsed, in his own mind, all that he did know about them, and it could be summed up in a few words.

Simon Blackstone was a Wall Street capitalist before the *exposé* of that gold swindle, in which he was the principal figure.

He had been a man reputed to be worth about ten millions, and, through his associates, to command the use of something like thirty millions for a working capital. Not content with that, he had associated with him this Julius Margrave, whose antecedents were entirely unknown.

Blackstone had been known in the Street for a good many years as a daring and successful operator. He was of the James R. Keene order, so far as his Wall Street operations were concerned, although a much less important factor in financial affairs.

And he had been ambitious.

The thirty-odd millions, which he could command for his deals, he used as playthings in the game of dollars; he desired to get up among the "big fellows," at the top of the financial world; he wished to become a power in Standard Oil; he believed himself to be more than capable to become the richest man in the world, if once he could command the opportunity, and it was to that end that he had organized the scheme of pretending to change water into gold.

"And so," mused Nick, "he brought Margrave upon the scene; they leased the house in South Street; they erected their machinery, and then Blackstone came to me to engage my services, in the belief that he could fool me, and knowing that if he did so, it would be an easy matter to deceive the men he was really after."

"That I exposed him."

"And then, at the last minute, when I was engaged in the hand-to-hand fight with Margrave and his followers, Blackstone, seeing and realizing that his only hope of escaping prison was to leap over to my side of the fight, not for others."

"Later he testified against his former partner. It was his testimony which put the nail into the verdict of the jury. Margrave was sent to prison and Blackstone went free; but he was ostracized by all his former associates. His name in the Street was at an end, and since that time he has not been seen around his old haunts at all."

"And Margrave? Well, he went to prison, but he bore there with hatred in his heart—with an oath in his mind to be proved some day upon Blackstone."

"And now there is this mysterious triple murder."

"Blackstone is shot to death in a hack at a time when it would appear that he was intending to leave the country on a foreign voyage, his companion in the hack is also shot to death. Both are shot through the heart. Both were instantly killed."

"The driver of the hack is also killed; but he is stabbed, and the stabbing is done from the interior of the vehicle."

"He is stabbed with a dagger with a jeweled hilt; a hilt decorated with 'green, red and white stones.' And a funny thing about it is that at the time when I arrested Margrave when I had the fight with him and gave him the scars he wears to-day which Coyle has so well described, he was rushing toward me with just such a dagger in his grasp."

"Then, again, there is the driver, now lying dead on a slab at the morgue."

"In that driver I recognized one of Margrave's old assistants—one of the men who assisted him in his attack upon me there in the house in South Street."

The cab in which the detective and the sergeant were passengers had crossed the city from the East River through Twenty-third Street, and it was now approaching Fourth Avenue.

Nick signaled to the driver to stop.

"Coyle," he said, "I am going to give you a little real detective work to do. The fact that you are in plain clothes will be of assistance to you."

"I'm ready. I only hope that I'm not too much of a jay to do it."

"I want you to get down here."

"Yes."

"You are at the scene of the collision. Now, I want you to take the back track along the route followed by that hack. Understand?"

"Yes."

"See how far you can trace it—backward. We know—or think we know—that it turned in to Twenty-third Street out of Madison Avenue, so you had better begin at that corner."

"Yes; I think so."

"It is a point in favor of your success, as well as against it, that the incident happened at about half-past four in the morning. It is not likely that many people were astray at that hour, to have noticed the rapidly driven hack, but it follows that if anybody did see it to notice it, they will not have forgotten it."

"That's as true as life, Mr. Carter."

"So, I want you to begin at that corner and trace the hack backward. Go from house to house, if necessary. Find somebody who saw that hack, and who will remember the incident."

"There is sure to be somebody," said Coyle.

"As sure as that you are sitting here beside me. It is only up to us to find that person, or those persons, for there are probably a dozen if we only knew where they are."

"Yes, sir."

"Trace the hack. Trace it back to where it started with its passengers, if possible, but if you can't do that, find out who owned the hack. Find where it came from."

"That ought to be easy."

"It should be easy enough, but you may discover that it is exceedingly difficult."

"Somebody owned that hack."

"Yes; it is up to you to find out who did."

"I'll make a bluff at it, anyhow."

"That's the idea. I'm going off on another tack. It is now ten o'clock in the forenoon. Meet me at my house at four this afternoon, and let me see how much you have to tell me."

"I'll be there; and if you are not, I suppose I am to wait till you come."

"Sure."

Coyle got down and walked rapidly along the street, and Nick directed his coachman to drive to Wall Street as rapidly as possible.

"There is one man in Wall Street who will be able to tell me everything that was ever known about Blackstone," he mused, as he got down from the cab at the corner of Broad and Wall, and bidding the driver await him, made his way rapidly into that narrow alley, which is known all over the world—New Street.

"Have you seen Mr. Shively?" he asked, of one broker whom he knew, and whom he encountered in a wild career across the narrow street.

"Yes; right back there; just passed him," panted the broker, and was gone.

Nick continued on his way, and presently encountered the man of whom he was in search.

"Hello, Charlie," he said, thrusting out his hand.

"Hello, Nick. Glad to see you," was the hearty reply.

"Are you busy for a few minutes?"

"No; got loads of time; things not going my way today; I'll take mine straight. Where will we go?"

"Anywhere. I want to ask you a few questions."

"All right. Come into Eberlin's. We can sit down there."

They entered the place, found a table and gave their orders.

"Now, Nick, what's up?" asked Shively.

"I want you to tell me everything you know about Simon Blackstone," replied Nick.

"Oh! Him! He's a dead one."

"You don't mean literally dead, I suppose," said Nick, calmly.

"Nay, nay, Pauline! He's dead, though, as far as the Street is concerned."

"I know that."

"You ought to; it was you who put him out of business. Say, that was a great graft of his about the sea wall, wasn't it? I shouldn't wonder if I had bitten if I had been given a chance. What do you want to know about him now?"

"What he was doing in the Street."

"Got it up. Got the an' under one."

"When did you see him last?"

"A couple of weeks ago. Met him in the lobby of a theater."

"Did you speak to him?"

"No; I was engaged in admiring the fresco work about that time."

"He was a bachelor, wasn't he?"

"So I've always understood."

"Do you know where he lives?"

"No."

"Did you ever know where he lived at any time?"

"Never; I don't think anybody else did, either."

"Why not?"

"He never gave his address."

"Not at all? Not to anybody?"

"I have never heard that he did. He received all his uptown letters—I mean such as he did not care to have come to his office, at the Westmoreland."

"He must have had a home somewhere."

"If he has got a home he has always succeeded in keeping its locality mighty dark."

"You never liked him much, did you?"

"Oh, yes; well enough. We never had much in common."

"Did you ever know the other fellow?"

"Who?"

"The chap who was associated with him in the sea-water scheme—Margrave?"

"Never saw him but once in my life, and that was when he was on trial for trying to kill you. I looked in at the courthouse then. That is the only time I ever saw him."

"And Blackstone never showed up in the Street after that, eh?"

"Oh, yes; he came down a few times to settle up his affairs; but there were icicles over the doors where he tried to enter, and the people he tried to talk to breathed frost in his face. I reckon he caught a chill every time he showed up down here; might have contracted pneumonia, you know."

"Did you ever know anything about his private life, Shively?"

"Not a thing."

"Ever see him out anywhere in the evening? You're such a rounder that it strikes me that you might have encountered him."

"Oh, yes; I've seen him half a dozen times in as many years."

"Ever notice who he had with him?"

"No; can't say that I did; not particularly."

"That night you saw him at the theater, two weeks ago; was anybody with him?"

"You bet your life there was!"

"Now, we are getting at it."

"So! That is what you are driving at, is it?"

"I don't know yet. Who was with him at that time?"

"A peach!"

"Eh?"

"That's what she was—a peach. You see, Nick, I studied the fresco on the ceiling of the lobby just long enough so that I wouldn't have to speak to him, and——"

"And then you devoted the rest of your study to his companion, eh?"

"Well, yes; only I didn't let her see that I did. I'm not such a cad as that, you know."

"Do you remember how she looked?"

"Do I! Well! Say, Nick, didn't I tell you that she is a peach? She was about the sweetest, prettiest——"

"That will do, old man. How old was she?"

"I didn't ask her; didn't have time; we weren't on sufficiently intimate terms, you know."

"Nonsense! Answer me."

"Anywhere from eighteen to twenty-five. You can't tell much about those women."

"What do you mean by 'those' women?"

"Gee! but you express a mighty lot of interest in that young woman. Have you seen her?"

"I can't tell you that until you describe her to me."

"Oh! I can do that to beat the band! I've seen her in my dreams ever since. I've got an extremely sensitive negative in the retina of my eyes—only in my case I think it is a positive, at that—and it records——"

"Never mind what it records. Describe the young woman to me."

"She was about so high"—and the broker held his hand just above his shoulders to illustrate what would have been about five feet five or six—"plump as a partridge, but not fat, you know; as round as a young Berkshire, but as lithe as a panther and as graceful as a fawn; carried her head like a thoroughbred, and stood like one, with her feet well under her, and every nerve on the quiver to start. Her hair was like—well, like a stream of gold in the sunlight. How's that? And there was such a lot of it. No chemical blond, that, Nick, but the real thing, and a fellow can tell the real thing when he sees it, there are so many imitations in his recollection to the few contrasts."

"How old man."

"Humph! Let me see. Eyes like the skies over Bermuda—or Naples—or any old place where the sky is so blue that it changes the water under it to sapphire. Hands—she had removed her left glove for some reason, and there was a wedding ring on it—like shells out of the sea. That? Cinderella could never have been in it with her for a holy minute, Nick."

"Was there a small mole, such as women would designate a beauty spot, against her left temple?"

"There was! There was! You have seen her, Nick?"

"Yes, I think I have."

"Where? Where? Do you think I could see her again?"

"Yes; if you should take the trouble to go where I saw her."

"Where was that? I will go, if it is a thousand miles."

"At the morgue."

The broker remained absolutely silent after that, and for a full minute he did not speak.

"Do you mean that?" he asked, then, "or are you only—er—joking?"

"I mean it, Shively. It is true."

"Dead?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Murdered. Shot through the heart."

"Great God! Did Blackstone do it?"

"No."

"You are sure of that?"

"Yes."

"Why is she at the morgue? Why hasn't somebody claimed her?"

"She has not been identified."

"Then, by the great chat-in-bootem—that is, I mean, by the great boot in Chatham Street, I'll go and do it myself."

"You forget that you do not know who she is."

"Don't I?"

"Do you?"

"You watch my smoke, and see if I don't!"

"Wait, Shively," said Nick, putting out a detaining hand when his companion started to rise. "I must ask you to tell me what you know about her before you make any move in the matter."

CHAPTER VII.

THE MURDERED WOMAN'S IDENTITY.

The broker resumed his seat at the table.

"Well?" he asked, "what do you want to know now?"

"Everything that you know about that young woman."

"Will you answer me a question or two first?"

"Willingly; anything you care to ask. I'm in no especial hurry."

"She was murdered, was she?"

"Yes."

"It wasn't suicide?"

"No."

"Who killed her?"

"I don't know."

"You are trying to find out? That is why you are here?"

"Yes."

"Why did you suppose that I would know about her?"

"I didn't; but I thought you would know about Blackstone. You are a sort of encyclopedia about things down around here, you know."

"Yes; I know. Now, how did you connect her with Blackstone?"

"I have seen them together—once," replied Nick, evasively.

"When?"

"I'd rather not answer that question just at present."

"I've got a good reason for asking it, and I wish you would answer."

"All right. I will; only I want you to keep still about this conversation until I give you permission to talk."

"I'll do that."

"He is with her now."

"With her now? What in blazes do you——"

"They are at the morgue together."

Shively had become quite calm now, although it was plain to be seen that he was greatly moved.

"Do you mean that Blackstone is also dead?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Shot?"

"Yes."

"Killed by the same person who shot her?"

"So it would seem; yes."

"When did it happen?"

"Early this morning? Haven't you seen the extras?"

"Oh! That affair at Fourth Avenue and Twenty-third Street, eh?"

"Yes."

"I didn't read it. Hasn't Blackstone been identified, either?"

"No."

"That's odd."

"He had shaved off his beard and mustache. He had taken the trouble to destroy every identifying mark upon him or about him. He had a hundred thousand dollars with him, and he was doubtless in the act of leaving the country forever when he was killed."

"Humph!"

"Now, suppose you tell me something about what you know. It is most time that you answered some questions for me."

"I'll do that. Go ahead."

"You knew who she was?"

"Yes."

"Who told you?"

"She did."

"How was that?"

"I encountered her, quite by accident, the next day after I saw her in the lobby of the theater. I was able to render her a service, and she was grateful."

"What sort of a service?"

"I found her looking like she was pumping her. You see, Nick, it was this way. I had occasion to go into the theater's store, and after I had made my purchases, I met by the entrance some extras. She was directly in front of me, and I did not know that until as we passed

out on the street, she came face to face with the fellow I hit."

"But why did you hit him?"

"Well, this way. When she saw him, she let out a little scream. I heard it because I was directly behind her. She screamed and he swore—and swore at her, too. She turned to escape him, and, in doing so, ran right into my arms. At the same instant, he reached out and grabbed her by the arm. She cried out again, and I didn't wait to ask any questions. I smashed him."

"You're a big fellow, Shively, and you can hit a hard blow."

"Yes; rather. I reckon he thought so, anyway. He went over like a tenpin, and then, before I could see whether he was knocked out or not, I felt her tugging at my arm. She was trying to drag me back into the store, and I let her do it. There was a crowd inside, and we lost ourselves in it."

"You didn't see the man again?"

"Narry a see. He's lying there yet, for all I know."

"What happened then?"

"Why, she thanked me, as soon as she had recovered her breath; but she was faint and all used up by the encounter, and as white as a sheet."

"Well?"

"I suggested that the St. Denis was quite near, and that it was about lunch time. She nodded, and we went out at the Broadway entrance and crossed over to the St. Denis. Then we went around into the rear dining room."

"Did she tell you her name?"

"Yes."

"What was it?"

"Mrs. Marlow. Her first name was Agnes."

"Who was the man you hit?"

"Her husband; or, rather, her ex-husband. She had secured a divorce from him. She didn't tell me any of the particulars about that, only that he never ceased to persecute her. All that she did say about him was that he was a thief and a scoundrel, and that she thought he was in prison at that time."

"In prison, eh? What sort of a looking man was he?"

"Lord bless you, Nick, I didn't have time to notice. He appeared and disappeared so very sudden, that I pledge you my word I wouldn't know him if I should meet him face to face at this very moment—and I doubt if he would recognize me, either. But he was tall—as tall as I am, well built and a blond, I think."

"Did he look at all like Margrave? You say you saw him once at the trial."

"Now that you suggest it, I don't know but he did; however, I couldn't really say."

"And she—— Tell me more about her."

"She was about the sweetest, loveliest, dearest little woman I ever saw in my life, and that's no dream."

"I wonder that you have remained a bachelor, Shively, you are so susceptible."

"Maybe that's the reason."

"I suppose you told her that the occasion was not the first time you had seen her?"

"Sure thing, and she remembered that she had also seen me."

"Really?"

"Didn't I say so? Blackstone pointed me out to her as one of his old-time acquaintances who no longer recognized him. She knew my name and used it in talking to me, before I had an opportunity to tell her what it is."

"I see. And that accounts for her readiness to accept your invitation to luncheon. She knew, at least, that you were a gentleman."

"Exactly. Anyhow, that was the way she explained it."

"Well, go on. Tell me all you know about her."

"She was married to the man, Marlow, only six months when she discovered that he was a criminal—an ex-convict, in fact. She got a divorce from him. She had been divorced a year at that time and she was, at present, engaged to marry—whom do you suppose?"

"Simon Blackstone."

"Yes, confound him!"

"I suppose you told her all about Blackstone?"

"No, I did not. I'm not such a cad as that. It was her business, not mine, and, besides, the very fact that he had pointed me out as one of his old acquaintances who used to speak to him, but who now cut him, was enough to satisfy me that she knew about the gold swindle."

"Did you ask her when she was to be married to Blackstone?"

"What do you take me for, Carter? No, I did not."

"Did you not express a desire to continue the acquaintance?"

"Yes; I did."

"What did she say to that?"

"She just laughed, and replied that I knew how impossible that was. I hadn't a thing to say to that, although I don't think I would have hesitated to treat Blackstone decently, if by doing it—"

"Nonsense, old man. Now, what next?"

"Nothing next. That's all."

"You parted at the St. Denis?"

"Yes; I put her in a hansom cab at the door."

"And you have not seen her since?"

"No."

"Well, you have told me a great deal. You have given me a clue to this case which I did not expect to find down here, and I think we will discover, eventually, that Agnes Marlow had become Agnes Blackstone before she was killed—probably that very morning or the evening preceding it; and if that be—"

"Well?"

"Why, I will have to look for the man Marlow; and I

strongly suspect that Marlow and Margrave are one and the same."

"I shouldn't wonder if that were so; and you think he killed them?"

"I think he was the means of killing them, although I do not think, at this moment, that he actually did, himself, all the killing that was done this morning. There were three murders, Shively."

"Three?"

"Yes; the driver was stabbed while he sat on the box of the hack."

Nick began at the beginning, then, and told the story of the tragedies of the morning; and he closed by saying that he had recognized the dead driver as one of the men who were in the employ of Margrave at the South Street place.

"I wonder if that could be the fellow——" began Shively, and paused.

"What fellow?" asked Nick.

"While we were at the table in the St. Denis, a hang-dog-looking rascal was walking up and down the walk, in Eleventh Street, past our window. He kept looking in at us, although I did not think he could see us through the curtains. I asked her if she knew him, but she said she had never seen him before. I say, Nick, suppose I take a run up to the morgue with you?"

"The very thing I was about to ask. My coupé is at the corner of Broad. Come along."

"Poor, little woman! She was much too beautiful to be done for in such a manner!"

"It is always the pretty woman who encounters the most danger, Shively."

"Sure thing."

The two men left the café together and were soon driving rapidly toward the morgue.

As they were about to enter the place, Nick took his companion admonishingly by one arm.

"Whatever you see or feel, while you are inside this place," he said, "show no evidence of it in your face or manner. Save your comments and your emotions until we get outside again, and then tell me all about them."

Then they entered the morgue.

CHAPTER VIII.

TWO PATHS WITH ONE ENDING.

Nick Carter stepped to one side as they drew near to the slabs whereon the three figures which interested them were lying.

A hasty glance around the room revealed Patsy, busily engaged studying the wreck of a blacking box, as if he were puzzled to know how it could ever be repaired.

Nick drew near to him, and Patsy managed to slip a note into his hand, which the detective had no time in reading.

It was written on a soiled margin torn from an old newspaper, and was as follows:

"Ten-Ichi has gone on a trail I thought worth while. He will report back at the house, and then come here again, if you wish."

That was all, and Nick nodded to the lad, and then turned his attention again to Shively.

The broker was standing beside the body of the murdered woman, and Nick could see that there were tears in his eyes.

He remained there so long, and stood so still, that at last the detective approached and touched him on the arm.

"Have you looked at the body of the driver?" he asked.

"No."

"Or at Blackstone?"

"No."

"Do so. Take a look at both of them and then come outside. I will wait for you there; and I wish to get back to my house as soon as possible."

Five minutes later Shively joined him in the street.

"Well?" asked the detective.

"The driver is the same man I saw through the window at the St. Denis."

"Then it is to be presumed that he was watching her, eh?"

"I should think that—yes."

"Did you see anything else which interested you?"

"No."

"Did you recognize Simon Blackstone?"

"Yes."

"What is the matter with you, old chap?"

"I reckon that I'm regularly done up, Nick. This thing has knocked me out. Are you expecting to be at home this evening?"

"I haven't the least idea. I can never tell that when I have a case on like this one."

"I suppose not."

"Did you think of calling?"

"I thought I might run in on you, if you were at home."

"Well, you might try it. Have you got something on your mind which you have not told me yet?"

"No; I don't think so."

"Don't you know?"

"Yes; of course I know. So long. I'll probably see you to-night."

"Won't you ride across town with me?"

"No; I'm going home. I tell you I'm done up. Never was so knocked out in my life. I am inclined to believe that I could have fallen in long with that woman, Nick, if I had had half a chance. I'll walk over to the L station and go home. So long for the present."

When Nick arrived at his own house he found Chick and Ten-Ichi both there awaiting him.

"You first, Chick," he said. "What about Margrave?"

"He left prison a month ago."

"Ah! He did, eh? How was that?"

"There was a mistake in entering his sentence on the records. Somebody else got his year, and he got somebody else's six months. Good behavior reduced that, so he got out a month ago."

"Humph! I don't suppose you got any trace of him. did you? You have hardly had time for that."

"But I did, all the same."

"You did? How?"

"Just by common luck; nothing else."

"Well, tell me about it."

"I met him face to face, or thought I did, and now I am positive that it was he."

"You don't say so."

"My inquiries took me to the district attorney's office. When I came out, I crossed over to Broadway, and then turned downtown in order to take the Park Place station of the L."

"Well?"

"He was walking directly in front of me. It was his walk that I caught onto first. If it hadn't been for that, I would not have noticed him, for he was disguised to beat the band. However, I generally go by first impressions, so I thought I'd keep him in sight a little while, anyway."

"And it was Margrave?"

"I only think so; I am not sure."

"Where did he go?"

"He went into the Astor House rotunda for a moment, took a drink and came out again. Then he boarded a Broadway car and rode to South Ferry. There he got down and walked up South Street until he arrived in front of the old gold factory."

"He didn't go in there, did he?"

"No; but he stopped, and appeared to be studying the building for some time. It is all closed up and locked, you know."

"Yes."

"After a little he went on again, and he kept up South Street until he came to the bridge, or almost there; but just before he got there, he stopped and seemed to be studying the shipping. Presently he crossed the street, went out on a pier and finally clambered aboard of a small schooner that was lying at the dock."

"And you left him there?"

"Not much. I waited. He wasn't gone very long, and when he came out he went into a ginmill on the corner and used the telephone."

"And you later inquired what number he had called?"

"I didn't have to. When he came out he stood on the corner, evidently waiting; and the thing he waited for wasn't long in coming. It was an automobile."

Nick whistled.

"Do you think he caught onto the fact that he was shadowed?" he asked.

"No, I do not. When the machine drew up at the sidewalk he jumped inside, gave a hurried order to the chauffeur, which I could not hear, and they started off at such a pace that I—well, I had to let him go; but I am satisfied that he made some sort of a date with the people on that schooner, and—"

"You are going back there right now."

"I was just about to start when you came in. I had left this explanation for you with Ten-Ichi; and, by the way, he has something interesting to tell you. I won't wait for it, for I want to get back to that schooner."

"All right. Go ahead."

Nick turned to Ten-Ichi.

"Now," he said, "what have you got on your mind?"

"This: While I was waiting outside at the morgue, Patsy stepped out and told me that a man had just entered who seemed mightily interested in the dead hack driver. Patsy said that the man first stopped beside the body of Blackstone, and that he actually grinned when he looked down at him. He did not bestow a glance upon the corpse of the woman, but passed on to that of the driver, and that then he scowled, and shook his fist, and moved his lips, as if he were swearing under his breath."

"He was doubtless Margrave's other assistant," said Nick.

"That was what Patsy thought. He followed the man out when he left the morgue, and then I took the trail."

"Quite right. Where did it take you?"

"Ultimately to the same schooner which Chick has already described."

"And then—"

"I left him there and came here."

"You should have remained on the watch, and sent word here for me," said Nick, severely.

"Yes, sir, under ordinary circumstances; but I was so positive that the man was safe to remain where he was for at least two hours, that I thought it best to report to you in person."

"How do you happen to be so cocksure, eh?"

"Because he was so drunk he could hardly stagger aboard the schooner."

"He might have been shamming."

"He wasn't. I made sure of that. He walked almost the way down, and he stopped in every ginmill he came to. I followed him in each time, and I saw the drink he swallowed. The morgue, or his emotions, or something, was too much for him. He got paralyzed, and I know that kind of paralysis when I see it."

"Did you take a good look at the schooner?"

"Yes, I went aboard of it. I helped him aboard."

"Did you get out, eh?"

"He couldn't have got there without me after the last

drink he took, and as it was, he fell in a heap on the deck before he got to it."

"I see. So you went aboard and roused somebody and asked if he belonged there, eh?"

"That is exactly what I did."

"Go on with your story."

"I hammered against the companion-way hatch, and presently a big Italian stuck his head out and demanded what I wanted."

"There's a man out here who says he belongs here," I told him. "He is so drunk he can't walk, and unless you want him to blister out here in the sun you'd better come out and get him." This rig of mine, like a street gamin, made the story seem all right, that I had helped the fellow."

"Sure."

"The Dago came out and picked my man up as if he had been a feather. I thought he wasn't going to say a word to me, but I stood my ground, and presently, after he had taken the drunk below, he came on deck again. Then he gave me a nickel and grinned at me in a way that would have shamed the Sphinx. I took it that he didn't understand English, or didn't care to have me suppose he did, and I came away."

"Do you think that was before or after Chick followed the other man there?"

"Before. We compared notes on that point. I must have left the schooner only a few minutes before he got there."

Nick Carter was silent for several moments.

"It seems evident that the schooner is destined to play some sort of part in this affair," he said at last. "We will see what Chick has to report a little later."

"Do you think I had better return to the morgue?" asked Ten-Ichi.

"No; there will be nothing more doing there; at least, I don't think so. Hello! There is the bell. Go and see who it is, lad; and tell Joseph I'm not at home to anybody just at the present moment—unless it happens to be Sergt. Coyle; and he is about due here now."

"It is Coyle," said Ten-Ichi, from the hallway.

"All right. Call to him. Have him up at once."

A moment later Coyle entered the room.

"Well," said Nick, "have you succeeded in tracing the back track of the old hack?"

"That's just what I have done, sir," replied Coyle.

"Good! Excellent! I expect great things of you, Coyle, when you are attached to headquarters."

"You're making fun of me now, sir."

"Indeed I'm not. Have you discovered who owned the hack?"

"Yes, sir. I'm onto the whole story from start to finish, I think."

"Good again! Let's have it, Coyle."

CHAPTER IX.

SERGT. COYLE'S GOOD WORK.

"I took the cue you gave me," began Coyle. "That is, I went from house to house, almost from person to person, along Madison Avenue, and I succeeded in following the hack track almost as clearly as if there had been wheel marks to direct me."

"I thought you would, if you took sufficient care," said Nick.

"I followed it up Madison Avenue to Twenty-eighth Street, and then through Twenty-eighth Street, west. I lost track of it at Sixth Avenue."

"I thought you said you followed it to the end?"

"Wait. I haven't got through yet."

"Go on."

"There's a smart sort of a bootblack at the northeast corner of Twenty-eighth and Sixth Avenue. I had questioned half a dozen before I got to him, but I found some information in him."

"Well?"

"He remembered the hack because he heard two pistol shots, one after another, from the inside of it, just as it was driving past him. He was just opening up his place."

"Two pistol shots, eh? That would seem——"

"Wait, sir, if you don't mind. He heard more than that."

"Oh, he did, eh?"

"I had to question him very closely to get it out of him, for at first he did not connect the two; but just after he heard the pistol shots, and while the hack was starting on again——"

"Hold on, there! Did the hack stop at all?"

"The bootblack was not sure, but he thought it did. He said that it seemed as if it had just started when he heard the shots, and he had not noticed it at all before that."

"Well, go on; only, if the hack stopped, the pistol shots might not have come from the inside of it at all, but from the other side."

"That is precisely what I thought, Mr. Carter."

"Go on with the story."

"Just after he heard the pistol shots, he heard a yell, a sort of scream such as might be made by a man in pain. That, too, seemed to come from the hack, or beyond it, and instantly the horses started into a rapid trot that was almost a run."

"Do you think that was when the driver was stabbed, Coyle?"

"That is what occurred to me; but wait till you hear the rest of the bootblack's testimony."

"All right."

"He watched the hack, then, with some interest. There were no customers around, and almost nobody at all on the avenue at that time. He saw it cross Broadway—

and he thought he saw the hack door open and somebody swing out and drop to the pavement, and then walk away, while it was crossing Broadway."

"He thought he did. He was not sure?"

"No."

"Did he think it was a man?"

"No; that's the funny part of it. He said if it was anybody, it was a woman; and that is why he was not sure."

"I see."

"It being a woman, he thought he was mistaken, and that she was simply crossing the street at the time, and so appeared to issue from the hack."

"Exactly."

"He said the horses were going very fast at that time. I know that they were running when they reached the corner of Madison Avenue, and that they barely missed an electric-light pole when they turned the corner."

"Which proves that they were not guided by a driver at that time."

"Yes, sir."

"What next?"

"I told you that I lost the hack at that corner?"

"Yes."

"I could find nobody else who remembered having seen it, although I spent more than an hour around there, inquiring. And then it occurred to me to walk on down the street toward Seventh Avenue."

"Well?"

"I inquired along there of everybody I met. I stopped at a stable or two, and made inquiries, but without result. Then I arrived at Seventh Avenue."

"Yes."

"There was another bootblack at a stand on that corner, who looked as if he had cut his eye teeth, and I asked him what time he had commenced work that morning."

"'Four o'clock, boss,' he replied."

"I asked him if he saw many hacks go through that street, and particularly if he had noticed one early that morning, and he told me he had. He said there were seldom hacks in that part of the street, and he did not remember ever to have seen one at that hour in the morning before; and then he added:

"'I reckon, boss, dat it was a party what had been gettin' spliced down at de cullud preacher's, cos I de seed de kerrige standin' dar befo' it went past hyer, sah.'

"That was enough for me, and I went along down the street. I found a colored minister halfway down the block, and rang his bell. He was a fine old fellow, too, and remembered perfectly well all that I wished to know."

"By Jove! Coyle, that was good work! Go ahead!

You are right in line with some information that I have picked up myself."

"The colored preacher said that a hack had stopped at his door at four o'clock, and that he had already arisen and was sweeping off his steps when it drew up at the door. He explained that he was once a slave, and was always an early riser."

"Go on; go on; I don't care about that."

"Well, Mr. Carter, he perfectly described the appearance of both of those corpses, as they must have appeared when they were alive; and—maybe you won't believe it—but he married them."

"Of course I believe it. I had already made up my mind that they were married somewhere this morning."

"You had? How was that? I thought I had a surprise for you; but nobody can surprise you much, I guess."

"You have surprised me, all right; but go on."

"There were three in the party—the bride and groom and one witness. The minister had to find the second witness for them."

"And who was the third member of the party?"

"A woman."

"A woman?"

"Yes."

"Then the Indian boy (black was right about the person he saw leap from the hack?)

"Yes. He must have been."

"A woman! Well, that is a poser. Did the minister describe her?"

"He couldn't. She kept her veil down all the time she was there. All that he knew about her was that she was called Agnes by both the others."

"Agnes! Why, confound it, that was the name of the bride!"

"Ah! So you know that, too. Yes; it appears that it was the name of both the women. I suppose there is more than one person in the world by that name."

"So on, Coyle. You are full of surprises."

"That is about all the information I received there. The minister thought the bride very beautiful, and—"

"They had to give their names to the minister. Did they give their right ones?"

"The man was married under the name of Simon Black, and the woman gave the name of 'Agnes Jackson.'"

"Which was entirely correct. Well, what then?"

"The minister received a brand-new one-hundred-dollar

bill for his trouble, and he was still bowing and scraping when I left him."

"No doubt."

"That was as far as I could trace the carriage backward."

"Sure."

"But I had a happy thought as I came out of the minister's house."

"What was that?"

"It occurred to me that I might trace it in the other direction."

"As far as the corner of Fourth Avenue and Twenty-third Street, yes."

"No; to the stable where it belonged."

"How?"

"I was raised among horses, Mr. Carter."

"Well?"

"Those particular horses were not badly frightened; apparently they were not, at least, until after they turned the corner of Madison Avenue. I gathered that much from what was told me along the route they took."

"Yes. Well?"

"It was the pistol shot they heard, then, which frightened them; it may be that one of them was hit by the bullet—"

"That's the idea, Coyle! Oh, you are a detective, all right. You'll succeed. Margrave was strolling along there, waiting for the hack to pass, for it had doubtless been arranged between him and his confederate, the other woman, that it would pass that way, unless she succeeded in doing the act before it got there. When he did see the carriage, he also saw that the driver had been killed. Perhaps he saw even more. We don't know about that, and we won't know until I put my digits on him. Anyhow, he was the one who fired the shot at that time, and he managed to sting one of the horses, to make it run. The hack wasn't going fast enough to suit him. That's the idea, Coyle. You're all right. Go on, now."

"Well, the horses were not badly frightened until that moment, and hence, finding themselves without a driver, with the reins hanging loose, they were making as directly as they could go for their own stable."

"Fine, Coyle, fine!"

"That was the happy thought which occurred to me when I came out of the colored minister's house."

"It was a good one."

"The horses were started through Twenty-eighth

Street. At Sixth Avenue they lost their driver, and hence, also, their direction."

"Sure."

"So they followed the only one they knew, and that one led to their stable."

"Good!"

"They turned down Madison Avenue because they were familiar with that way. If they had not been so, they would have kept along through the street. They turned again at Twenty-third Street, toward the east, and—do you happen to know that there are a whole lot of stables in Twenty-second Street?"

"Yes."

"So do I; and I know every stableman in that street, too. My beat, when I was a patrolman, was right through there, for almost five years."

"So, after that idea came to you, you hadn't much more trouble."

"I didn't have any more. I found what I wanted right away."

"Good."

"The hack belonged to Barney Owen, in Twenty-second Street."

"And you found him?"

"Sure I found him."

"Why hadn't he missed his hack and gone on a hunt for it?"

"Because he sold it, and the horses as well, the day before."

"Aha! To whom?"

"To a man who very well answers to a description of the dead driver."

"I begin to see through this thing, Coyle," said Nick, leaning back in his chair and smiling. "I think the trail is getting hot."

CHAPTER X.

A PUZZLE OF TWO NAMES.

"Now, tell me about that sale, and how it happened that your friend, Barney Owen, happened to sell the hack and horses at all," said Nick.

"That happened very simply. The man—he said his name was Clarke, but that, of course, was only an alias assumed for the moment—applied at the stable about eight o'clock last night for a closed hack and a pair of horses. He said he wished to act as his own driver, and that he was willing to pay well for the privilege.

"Barney told him that he didn't know him at all, and that he could have the hack and the horses all right, if he would leave a deposit equal to the value of the outfit."

"I'll buy the whole push," said the man. "All right," says Barney. "How much?" says the stranger. "A thousand plunks," says Barney. "The rig's mine," says the stranger; and he ups and pulls out a wad and chucks ten one-hundred-dollar williams at Barney's head; and then he jumps onto the box, picks up the reins, lets out a laugh, and tells Barney that he's a softy kind of an Irishman, and drives off."

"And that was the last of him, eh?" asked Nick. "We don't know where he went after that, do we?"

"No; we don't know where he went after that—but all the same, it isn't the last of him—not quite."

"How is that?"

"One of the drivers in Barney's stable saw the hack and the horses, about midnight, after the transaction."

"Where?"

"He had occasion to drive to Fulton Ferry, and in coming away from there—they were fixing the street or something—he had to drive up South Street a ways before he turned to get back to Broadway, and——"

"And he saw the hack and horses standing near a pier where there was a small schooner in the slip, not far from the tower of the Brooklyn Bridge; eh?"

"How in blazes did you know that, I'd like to know?"

"Merely because other trails have led to that place. This other driver recognized the horses and the hack, did he?"

"Yes."

"Did he stop, or make any inquiries, or do anything about it?"

"No; why should he? The hack no longer belonged to Barney. It was none of his business where it was then, or what became of it."

"Certainly not."

"Well, that is my story. That is all I know about it."

"You have done remarkably well, Coyle; better than most tried detectives could have done, and I shall take occasion at the first opportunity to tell the inspector about it."

"I wish I could have found the house where that wedding party started from."

"So do I."

"In my opinion, it can't be far from Twenty-eighth Street."

"Probably not; but why do you think so?"

"Well, I figure it this way: That wedding party went to a colored minister to be married, which was rather an unusual thing for them to do."

"Yes."

"And that part of Twenty-eighth Street is not any too savory."

"No."

"It is not likely that any of the party know much about that locality."

"No."

"And so it follows that one of them saw the minister's sign—I forgot to say that he had a shingle beside his door, which read 'Peter Y. Jackson, Preacher of the Gospel'—one of them had seen the sign while walking or driving past there. It seemed like a promising place to apply to be married at four in the morning."

"Did you ask the preacher if he had ever known any of the parties before that ceremony was performed?"

"Yes; he had never seen nor heard of any of them before that time."

Nick looked at his watch, and was silent for a moment.

"How much sleep did you have last night, Coyle?" he asked.

"None at all."

"Then go upstairs and lie down for a while. Tenchi will show you where to go. Take a good nap, and I will call you when I want you."

"Isn't there anything more to do now?"

"No; not till late-to-night."

"And then——"

"Then? Well, I have an idea that I will take you and Chick along with me—if he is back here by that time—and that we will make an investigation of that quarter. Margrave has been traced there; the companion of the dead driver has been traced there, and I think we will find something doing on board that vessel. Chick is down there watching it now."

"Good. You won't go without me, will you?"

"Certainly not. I want your big muscles along with me to-night, Coyle. There is likely to be a scrap before we return here."

"So much the better. I'm spoiling for a fight, Mr. Carter."

"Then sleep soundly for a few hours, for I should not wonder if you would get one before you see another sun."

When he was alone, the detective lighted a cigar and, selecting one of his favorite books, seated himself to read.

Dinner was announced, and Nick directed that Coyle be not disturbed.

"He can have his dinner when he wakes," he said. "I will call him in time for that."

The detective more than half expected to hear from Chick, either in person or over the telephone, before the evening was far advanced; but he was disappointed in this. No word whatever came from the faithful assistant.

At half-past eight, however, a card was brought to him, and he directed that the caller be shown at once to his study. It was Charles Shively, the broker who had accompanied him to the morgue that afternoon.

"Come in," said Nick, when Shively hesitated at the door. "I did not know whether to expect you or not. You were so ambiguous about your possible call to-night that I had about given you up."

"Well, you see, Nick, I was not sure that I would have anything to tell you," replied Shively, accepting the proffered chair.

"And now you are sure that you have something to tell me; is that it?"

"Yes; that is it."

"Good! What is it?"

"I have found out Blackstone's address."

"Splendid! How did you do it?"

"Well, I happened to think of a chap whom I thought would know, if anybody did. That was why I left you. I wanted to find him, and I found him."

"Well, what is the address?"

"It's in Twenty-seventh Street, just east of Fifth Avenue. I don't know the number, but I know how to find the house."

"Good! I think we will run around there at once."

The detective rang the bell for Joseph.

"If Sergt. Coyle should wake," he said, "tell him he is to wait here for my return; and if any message should come from Chick, tell him to call up again in half an hour, and then if I am not here, to hold the wire till I come. Now, Shively, we haven't very far to go, and I have many reasons for wishing to hasten. Come along."

The house to which Shively conducted the detective has been soon closed in the last six months, but at that time it was located only a few doors back of the Reform Club, in Twenty-seventh Street.

Nick rang the bell at once.

"I wish to see Mr. Simon Blackstone," he said, when the summons was answered.

"Mr. Blackstone is not here," was the reply.

"He lives here, does he not?"

"Yes, sir; but he is out."

"Do you know when he will return?"

"No, sir."

"Can you tell me where he can be found?"

"No, sir; I have no idea where he is."

"Do you know when he went out?"

"He has not been here since the day before yesterday."

"Ah! Indeed! He has not given up his residence here, has he?"

"Oh, no. He retains his rooms by the year."

"Do you know if anybody was with him when he left here day before yesterday?"

"No; I do not."

"Thank you. I will call again later."

He turned away from the door then, and took his companion by the arm.

"Come along, Shively," he said. "I have an idea."

"What is it?"

"You told me that Blackstone received his mail at the Westmoreland, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"I am going around there. It isn't far."

At the Westmoreland Hotel Nick inquired for the manager, and called him aside.

"You know Simon Blackstone?" he asked.

"Certainly."

"He died not two hours dead he?"

"Not exactly. He has a room somewhere in Twenty-seventh Street; but he receives his mail here, and he takes almost all his meals here."

"When did you see him last?"

"Night before last. He remained here overnight."

"Ah! And he had guest at dinner, did he not?"

"Yes, two."

"Two ladies?"

"Yes."

"And they also arrived in the hotel overnight?"

"Yes."

"Please show me your register—I want to see the names of his guests."

"I can tell you that without procuring the register, for I registered them myself at the request of Mr. Blackstone."

"Very well; what were the names?"

"Mrs. Agnes Marlow and Miss Agnes Marlow. Rather odd, that, eh? The names are the same, only one is Mrs. and the other is Miss."

"Humph!" said Nick. "The wife and the sister of the same man, who happen to possess identical given names; that is all."

"Yes; that is the way I sized it up."

"When did the ladies leave here?"

"Last evening; no, this—but wait. I will find out for certain."

He hurried to the desk, and soon returned.

"They left at three this morning," he said. "That is, they were called at two-forty-five, and went away soon after that in a carriage which called for them. I suppose they had to catch an early train. They had no baggage."

"Blackstone had already gone, you say?"

"I have not seen him since night before last. He left early the following morning, and has not been here since."

"That will do; thank you."

The detective was soon in the street again.

"Where now?" asked Shively.

"Back to Twenty-seventh Street."

"What for?"

"I'm going to compel the people there to let me make an examination of Simon Blackstone's rooms. Come on."

"Can you do it?"

"Watch me, and see."

CHAPTER XI.

A MIDNIGHT ATTACK ON THE SCHOONER.

"I wish to see your mistress," said Nick, to the same maid who had opened the door for him at his first call.

To her, when she appeared, he said:

"Madam, your patron, Mr. Blackstone, is dead. His body is at the morgue, as yet unidentified. I wish——"

"My goodness gracious, sir!"

"Yes. Exactly. I wish you would take the trouble to go around to the morgue in the morning and identify the

"It will be better that you should do so, since he lived here in your house. In the meantime, I will thank you if you will conduct me to his rooms. I am an officer. Here is my badge. Mr. Blackstone was murdered, and it is necessary that I take a look through his rooms at once. You may remain with me while I do so."

The woman hesitated only a moment, but there was that in Nick's manner which compelled her to obey, and presently she led the way up two flights of stairs, to a suit of rooms and bath on the third floor.

The rooms were furnished plainly, but rather expensively. There was a huge desk in one corner, which fortunately was not locked, and to this Nick applied himself at once.

He went through the various papers rapidly, now and then placing one aside, while he returned others to pigeonholes from which he had taken them.

In one of the drawers of the desk he discovered a huge pile of photographs, and these he also rapidly assorted, putting several of them aside, as he had done with the papers and letters.

In the second room there were three large trunks, also unlocked.

He examined these rapidly, but discovered nothing of interest.

After half an hour of search, he announced that he was through, and, having given the woman of the house a written statement of what he had done, to which he signed the name of Inspector McClusky as well as his own, he took his departure, followed by Shively.

"That is the best half-hour's work I have accomplished in a good while," he announced to his companion, as they were walking together toward his own residence.

"How so?" asked Shively.

"Why, I know pretty much the entire story now," replied Nick. "I have letters here which tell more of it, and a diary which Blackstone seems to have kept rather religiously, which supplies what is missing in the letters. One would think that he filled the diary for the very purpose of explaining things in case he was—in case anything happened to him."

"Perhaps he did."

"I haven't a doubt of it. I have another great bit of evidence, now."

"What?"

"A very good photograph of——"

"Of Agnes Marlow?"

"Of both Agnes Marlows."

"Great Scott! were there two?"

"Yes; one was Mrs.; she was the one you knew. The other is Miss; and she is Marlow's or Margrave's sister."

"What has she got to do with the case?"

"Considerable, since she was the one who did the killing."

Nick drew the pictures from his pocket, separated them, and gave one of them to Shively, as he spoke.

"Do you mean to say," asked Shively, "that this delicate-looking woman shot Blackstone and her sister-in-law, and then stabbed the driver of the hack?"

"That is about the size of it, Shively. She looks as if she could do it, too. It is rather a pretty face, but there is a whole lot of devil in it. My experience with wicked women is that they are a whole lot more daring than men, and will take greater chances in accomplishing a crime, once they have made up their minds to do so. Here we are, Shively. Will you come in? If you happen to want a night of some excitement, I think I can promise it to you if you care to take your life in your hands for a few hours. What do you say?"

"Just the thing, Nick."

"Then come ahead."

* * * * *

If there had been a clock in the neighborhood, it would have been striking twelve of the night when Nick Carter, followed by Sergt. Coyle and the broker, Shively, walked down Beckman Street to the East River and turned into South Street.

South Street is rather a wide thoroughfare, and during the busy hours of the day it is usually thronged with vehicles of every description, laden with freight; but at midnight it is almost as deserted as a graveyard.

But there are lights along the street, nevertheless, and there are many pedestrians—being mostly composed of sailors and longshoremen. The ginmills are always glaringly open until one o'clock, and surreptitiously open during the remainder of the night.

Ten-Ichi was there, also, and acted as pilot for the little company.

Presently he paused, and by a nod and a slight wave of one hand indicated the location of the schooner of which mention has already been frequently made.

"All right," said Nick, in a low tone. "We will step inside of this saloon and sit down at one of the tables while you find Chick and bring him to me."

Nick had disguised the entire party to his own satisfaction, before starting out on the expedition, and they represented, collectively, an aggregation of seafaring men who had been out for a lark—and found it.

Coyle was rigged out as a boatswain's mate, and he looked the part; and if a rolling gait could be an added indication of his supposed calling, he had it down to a nicety.

Shively, in addition to the remainder of his costume, wore the cap of a first mate in the merchant marine, while Nick was just a rough-looking "A. B.," and Ten-Ichi a nondescript.

They had only a few minutes to wait at the table before Chick put in an appearance.

He was alone, for he had left Ten-Ichi outside to keep watch for him while he was absent.

"Hello, mate!" called Nick, when his assistant entered the barroom. "Where away? Avast, there, my hearty, and warp up alongside of us. Barkeep, set the pumps to work, so's we'll keep afloat, will you? And send that lubber of a Dago here with another chair. There you are, mate."

They talked on together in this strain until the ale had been served—ale which not one of the party cared to swallow, although they made a pretense of doing so; but when that was done and they were forgotten in the access of other customers, Nick said:

"Well, Chick?"

"He's there," replied the assistant.

"Margrave?"

"Yes."

"And the fellow Ten-Ichi followed? Is he still there, also?"

"Yes; unless he came ashore before I returned here."

"When did Margrave come back to the schooner?"

"Not till about an hour ago."

"In the automobile?"

"No; he walked. He did not come alone, either."

"Good! He brought a woman with him, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"The other A. B.," said Nick. "We're in luck, lad. We've got the whole push aboard of that yacht. Have you any idea how many men there are there?"

"Almost enough to operate a man-of-war, I should say, judging by what I have seen."

"What time, now, even?"

"I have separate parties of six each have come ashore every half hour."

"And returned again?"

"Yes. They only came in here where we are, sat around for half an hour each, drank a few glasses of ale, and then went back."

"Which proves," said Nick, "that their quarters are rather small and very much crowded aboard the schooner, and which therefore suggests that they do not expect to remain in such close quarters for any considerable length of time. The whole party is bound somewhere else. This schooner is only a makeshift. I shouldn't wonder——"

He paused, and, after a moment, Shively inquired:

"What, Nick?"

"Why, it occurred to me at that moment that possibly Margrave, or Marlow, or whatever his real name happens to be, has been engaged in organizing some sort of a gang, and that the schooner is here simply for the purpose of conveying them all to the place of rendezvous."

"Well, we know that there are eighteen men aboard at least."

"We know that there are twenty, at least, besides a woman."

"How so?"

"There's the captain—the one seen by Ten-Ichi, and there's Margrave. Chick has counted eighteen others, and there may be several more for all we know."

"And it is more than likely there are others."

"Sure."

"Well, what is the next move?"

"There isn't any just at present."

"What do you propose to do?"

"Wait where we are until it is time to begin."

"And when will that be?"

"Oh, somewhere about two o'clock; after one, anyhow. I don't want to do anything until this neighborhood quiets down, and it won't do that till after one."

"We will be put out of here at one o'clock."

"All the better. We can make believe we are rather full, and hang around the door. We'll do a little horse play, then, just to keep up the good work."

"Suppose the schooner should set sail before the time?"

"I hardly think that is likely."

"But if it should?"

"I'll give the necessary orders when it happens."

"Shall I go outside again?" asked Chick.

"No; remain where you are. Ten-Ichi will stand by anything that happens outside."

The hour passed quietly away.

The detective and his companions at the table succeeded in filling the cuspidors around them with the ale they could not swallow; and then one o'clock came, and they were requested to leave, not being well enough known to the proprietor to be permitted to remain after the closing hour.

Outside, the street was already deserted, save that here and there a lonely wanderer appeared through the gloom; and, almost without exception, these few were tacking, as if they were seeking to make harbor against a head wind.

Then half-past one came; and, after another wait, Nick managed to look at his watch, and discovered that it was two o'clock.

"Time's up," he said. "Now, listen, all of you."

"We're all attention," replied Shively, who was enjoying the time of his life.

"We've got a hard proposition ahead of us."

"Oh, it'll be dead easy," said Coyle, raising one of his brawny arms over his head, as if he were anxious to swing it to some purpose.

"We know there are at least twenty men aboard that schooner, and it is more than likely that they'll put up a fairly good fight."

"Maybe so."

"But we will take them off their guard. They probably have no idea that we are onto them at all."

"And if that is so, the most of them will be asleep," said Chick.

"Probably. Now, Coyle."

"Yes, sir."

"And you, Shively, with Chick, are to go to the fore-castle. It is your part of the game to take charge of that end of the schooner."

"Sure, we can do that like eatin' soup with a ladle."

"Perhaps so. You can batten down the hatch and keep them there, if nothing else."

"And never have a ghost of a show to swing me down? Nay, nay."

"We'll obey orders, Coyle. Your duty is to capture the vessel, no matter how you have to do it; but you are to accomplish it in the surest and safest way possible."

"Right, sir."

"We will have to let them go, later. There is nothing against them. The people I want will be in the other end of the vessel—in the cabin."

"Are you going to nab them alone?"

"That is exactly what I intend to do, with the under-

standing that the moment any one of you can leave the forward part of the boat and come aft to my assistance, it must be done. I can handle them, all right, barring accidents—but accidents are always likely to happen, you know."

"Sure."

"Now, do you understand your orders?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well and good. Come on, then."

He directed that they follow him in single file, and that when they reached the opposite side of the street where the docks were; that they stretch out at some distances apart, so that the watch on deck, if there should happen to be one, would not be attracted by the approach of so many together.

They crossed the street and made their way out upon the dock alongside of the schooner without incident.

If there was a watch aboard the schooner, he paid no attention to them, or did not see them at all.

The vessel was lying with her bow toward the shore, so Nick was obliged to traverse the length of her before attempting to board; and this he did, for he saw that there was a plank which stretched from the dock to that schooner, near the after companion way.

He glanced back as he was about to mount to the deck of the vessel, and saw that his friends were already aboard, and were grouped silently around the forward hatch, waiting for him to begin the attack.

Then he stepped forward, into the companion way, and, hearing voices and seeing lights proceeding from inside the cabin, he boldly pushed the door ajar and entered.

CHAPTER XII.

AN EAST RIVER MYSTERY.

There were four people in the schooner's cabin when Nick Carter thus unceremoniously entered it and interrupted them; that is, there were four whom he could see, and three of them he recognized at a glance.

Margrave was there, and was seated at the table in the center of the cabin, in such a position that he was facing the detective when he entered. Nick, of course, recognized him instantly.

The man who had been one of Margrave's assistants at the gold factory in South Street—the one whom Ten-Ichi had tracked to the schooner, was also there, and he was seated at the table also, so that his side was toward the detective, who instantly recognized him.

The young woman whose picture Nick had taken from the rooms of Simon Blackstone, and whom he therefore knew at once, was at the opposite side of the table. Her side face was toward the detective, but she turned it full upon him when he entered.

The other man—evidently the captain of the schooner—was seated with his back toward Nick, but he leaped to his feet and turned when the detective forced his way into the cabin, for there was a simultaneous exclamation of amazement and alarm from each of the others because of the unexpected interruption.

It was at once evident to Nick that they had been holding a council of some kind, and he regretted that he had not waited for a moment outside, in order to hear something of their plans; but it was too late to think of that now.

Nick, it will be remembered, was in disguise, so neither of the two who had such good cause to remember him recognized him when he appeared among them.

Margrave was the first one upon his feet, and he must have had a revolver ready at hand on the table in front of him, for he raised it and pointed it at the detective at the selfsame instant when he leaped up.

"Who are you? What do you want?" he demanded; and Nick, perceiving that conditions were as they were, thought it best to dissimulate for a moment; besides, he wished time for Chick or Ten-Ichi or Coyle, or even Shively, to get to him if possible.

Not that he feared the result of a possible combat with the four persons who now faced him, but that he wished to take them all, and to take them uninjured, if possible, and he realized that if it came to a fight, somebody was likely to get badly hurt before it was over.

So, when the two questions were popped at him thus suddenly, he staggered a little, clutched at the door as if he were intoxicated, and replied:

"Beg pardon, mate, I guess I've got into the wrong berth."

He made a pretense of an attempt at withdrawing then, but the sharp voice of Margrave arrested him.

"Stand where you are, you!" he shouted. "If you move, I'll kill you!"

"Awww, there! You wouldn't do that, would you?" exclaimed Nick in evident terror.

"Who are you?" demanded Margrave again; and Nick, not that he feared the question, but that he feared the result of his plan, and it seemed on the table in front of him.

It was time to act then, for the detective.

Instantly he saw that he had the advantage.

The evidence of intoxication disappeared like a flash.

His arms shot out, and when they were extended in front of him, there was a pistol in the grasp of each hand, and the muzzles were waving ominously, so that they effectually covered each one of the four persons in their gyrations.

"Drop that gun, Margrave!" he commanded, in a voice which was as unrelenting as fate itself. "Drop it, or I'll shoot it out of your hand with a bullet through your wrist. And you others—the first one of you who attempts to make a break—well, don't do it, that's all!"

For one instant there was silence, during which nobody moved.

"Do you know who I am now, Margrave?" asked Nick, with a smile.

"Nick Carter!" exclaimed Margrave.

"You guessed it the first time. Captain, don't move your feet another inch, as you just did, or I will hurt one of them. Madam—or, rather, Miss Marlow—keep that right hand of yours away from your bosom. I should dislike to spoil its beauty, but I will if you attempt to draw the revolver you have got concealed there."

The woman smiled back at him, dauntless and determined. She seemed not in the least frightened by the encounter; indeed, she was the only one in all that party save Nick, who retained presence of mind.

"So! You are Nick Carter?" she asked, imperturbably.

"Yes," replied Nick; "and you are Miss Agnes Marlow, or Margrave, my prisoner. I want you all. There is a room at police headquarters awaiting each of you."

"Are you alone?" asked the woman again.

"Listen, if you wish a reply to your question," said Nick; and at that moment there came a chorus of shouts and curses from the forward end of the schooner, followed almost immediately by the sound of heavy blows, as if somebody was hammering.

"My men are battenning the forward hatch," added Nick. "Your men will be safer in the fore-castle, for the present."

The detective did not expect an attack from the woman.

He was watching her narrowly, lest she should make another effort to draw a weapon from her bosom; but he in nowise expected her to do what she did do.

But she did it, and she did it so suddenly and so well that even the detective was taken entirely by sur-

prise, and she acted in a manner that was truly feminine, as well as startling and disconcerting.

She uttered a scream which might have been heard upon the roadway of Brooklyn Bridge, and at the same instant she threw herself toward the detective in a leap which would have done credit to a four-footed animal, so that she covered the distance between them while the scream was still ringing from her throat.

She was upon Nick before he could avoid her.

True, he might have shot her, but he did not want to do that; and, wily woman that she was, she had realized that fact before she made the leap.

It was upon his sense of chivalry that she depended, for the success of her sudden attack, and the sequel proved that she had divined correctly.

As she leaped forward, she threw out her hands, and when she reached the detective she seized him by his extended arms, dragging them down so that his pistols were, for the instant, unavailable.

Instantly, with that attack, the men sprang toward him also.

He threw the woman from him with such force that she careened against the captain of the schooner, and both rolled to the floor of the cabin together.

But Nick had only time to realize that much, when the remaining two men fell upon him.

It was a hand-to-hand fight now, for a moment, although Nick did not permit that moment to be of long duration.

The pistols he had held in his hands were released from his grasp by the sudden attack of the woman, and had been drawn back inside his sleeves by the springs to which they were attached, and as the two men fell upon him, he seized the foremost one by the throat, and then, as the other came within his reach, he grasped him in the same manner.

We already know something of the prodigious strength which reposes in Nick Carter's hands and fingers—fingers which find no difficulty in tearing apart four full packs of cards placed one on top of another; and of the mighty power in his arms—arms which even the great strength and weight of Sergt. Coyle could not put down.

When his hands seized the two men, each by the throat, he started himself, for one mighty effort, and he then threw upon their windpipes with a force which would have broken their pants had he continued to exert it for long.

But at the same instant he made use of the muscles of his arms.

He brought them together with a sudden rush, and with a power which there was no offsetting.

It was irresistible and it was terrible.

The heads of the two men, Margrave and his *alter ego*, came together with a shock which must almost have cracked their skulls, and which they certainly could not withstand.

It sounded like the sharp blow of a mallet against wood; and, as he opened his hands and released the men he had seized, they sank to the floor of the cabin together, in two inanimate heaps.

Both were stunned; both were senseless; both were down and out; there was no more to fear from them.

When Nick released them and they fell, he leaped back and turned to face the other two—the woman and the captain of the schooner.

To his amazement, he discovered that both of them had disappeared.

Short as the time of his struggle with the other two had been, they had found an opportunity to escape from the cabin.

Now, Nick did not care much about the captain; but the woman, the murderess—he wanted her.

He turned to dash out of the cabin after them, only to find himself face to face with big Sergt. Coyle, who was holding in his giant grasp the struggling figure of the captain.

"Where is the woman?" demanded Nick.

"Woman? I saw no woman," replied Coyle.

"Remain here!" ordered Nick. "Let nobody escape!"

He leaped past Coyle, out of the cabin, up the companion-way stairs, and upon the deck; and there he collided with Chick.

"Go into the cabin! Help Coyle!" he ordered.

Then, without pausing, he leaped to the dock and dashed away toward the street, for he at that instant caught a glimpse of a female figure crossing it toward the corner.

She was flying along as fleet as a hare—running like a sprite, flitting like a shadow through the darkness, where only the glare from far-off electric lights revealed her form to the pursuing detective.

He bounded across the street after her.

He turned the corner as she had done, and he could still see her, far in advance of him, crossing up the street.

The detective exerted himself to the utmost, but it seemed that he could not gain.

Impeded though the woman was by her skirts, she was still as fleet of foot as the detective; but he knew that, although he did not gain much, if any, upon her, he was still not losing ground.

The street was deserted, save for themselves. There was nobody to whom he could call out to stop her in her career, and so they ran on and on.

At the corner of William Street she turned northward, and for a moment or two Nick utterly lost sight of her.

He wondered if he would lose her altogether, and he put on a spurt which brought him to the corner with a rush. He saw then that he had gained a little, for she was not so far away as before.

From the corner to the passage underneath the bridge, she seemed to lose a trifle more, and, as if realizing this, she turned up the stairway which bridge patrons use.

Nick was not more than a hundred feet behind her, then; and, as she turned, he saw that she carried something in her hand. It looked like a rope, in that fleeting glance he had of it, but he could not say positively.

When he turned up the stairs, she had disappeared; but he knew there was only one way she could go; it did not occur to him that there were really two ways, after she gained the top.

When he reached the head of the stairs, he lost her for an instant. Then he looked behind him and saw her leap to the track and run toward the river.

Instantly he was after her. She gained the open bridge, where the plank fence of iron separates the roadway from the railway, and there, she placed her hands upon the top of the fence and leaped it like a fawn, alighting in the roadway uninjured, and dashing away again toward the river at full speed.

Nick followed; but again she seemed to have wings.

He was conscious that she was outstripping him; that she was gaining; that the distance between them was increasing.

When, many the policeman, who should have accompanied him, he wondered; there was not one in sight; and as the two sped along all the way to the tower, and beyond it, out upon the span over the river.

But she did not give him after that.

She had gained so much on the detective that she was between him and the hundred feet in advance of him, when she looked back over her shoulder, and the next, began

to climb upon the big, iron rail which guards the roadway at the outer side.

"My God!" thought Nick. "She is going to jump!"

He was not mistaken.

For an instant she stood there, poised upon the rail.

The girl waved her hand mockingly at Nick, and, turning, leaped out into the night, and into the space beneath her.

For just one instant Nick Carter hesitated. He half took off his coat. Then he recollected how useless it would be to leap after her—how perilous. He ran to the edge and looked down.

There was not a sign of her to be seen.

In the distance he saw a small boat, rowing rapidly away, and he hailed it; but there was no answer.

Then he decided to return to the schooner.

Ten minutes later he reached it and clambered upon the deck.

In a few words he related all that had happened.

"The woman is dead," said Coyle. "That is a sure thing."

"If not," replied Nick, "she almost deserves her liberty."

"She's dead, all right," said Shively.

"Whether she is or not, is just at present an East River mystery," rejoined the detective.

Before writing "The End" it must be said that Blackstone's landlady identified him, the following morning, and that his body was duly cared for by distant relatives.

Shively, under an assumed name, found a resting place for the unfortunate woman, for he could never forget how beautiful she was.

Margrave and his assistant both went to Sing Sing, and to the electric chair; and both confessed before they died.

It was the young woman who leaped from the bridge who committed the murders in the hack and who stabbed the driver in the back, and she had done it all at the instigation of her brother; and it was he who fired the shot in Twenty-third Street which wounded one of the horses and made them run into the car.

"We have always been a family of criminals," he said in conclusion, "and I shouldn't wonder if my sister Agnes will come to life again, out of the river. If she does, look out."

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 420, will contain "The Phantom Highwayman; or, Nick Carter's Sleazy Claw."

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